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191755Z Oct 05

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 OTTAWA 003125

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SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR S/CRS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [PTER](#) [CA](#)

SUBJECT: CANADA'S EVOLVING CAPACITY FOR DISASTER RELIEF AND  
POST CONFLICT STABILIZATION

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. HANDLE ACCORDINGLY.

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: Canada's Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force (START) Secretariat, a new bureau with responsibilities equivalent to those of S/CRS and some of the State Pol/Mil Bureau, began operating on September 6. Housed in the International Security Branch under A/DM Jim Wright, it has responsibility for all civilian policy and operational activities related to post conflict and disaster response, including de-mining, SA/LW, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, post-conflict stabilization, and humanitarian response. The bureau has managed Canada's contribution to the AU force in Sudan, elections support in Haiti, and peacebuilding in the Middle East. START personnel are interested in building strong linkages with U.S. and other counterparts and are seeking the best mechanism for prior planning among international partners. End Summary

START ORGANIZATION

[1](#)2. (SBU) On October 18 Senior Director and Deputy Head of Secretariat Tim Martin and three of five directors in the

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newly established Foreign Affairs Canada Secretariat for the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force (START) offered poloffs an overview of the development of Canada's response capability for post conflict and disaster response. The Secretariat was established with impetus from the

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International Policy Statement in order to consolidate all offices that play a role in the conflict cycle. The Secretariat has five units:

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-- Human Security Program Management Group (IRG): Manages Canada's Human Security Program and will assume responsibility for the Global Peace and Security Fund (GPSF) established by the International Policy Statement.  
-- Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Group (IRC): Primarily a planning and policy shop, works with regional bureaus to monitor trouble spots and design future peacebuilding programs.  
-- Peacekeeping and Peace Operations Support Group (IRP): The START operational arm, responsible for inter-agency management of active peacekeeping missions, and implementing initiatives from the Sea Island Summit; and oversees the task force that is responsible for Sudan.  
-- Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Response Group (IRH/GHA): Co-managed with the Global Issues Bureau, key responsibilities include coordination of response to humanitarian crises (deployment of the DART team); provided the lead on the recent response to the earthquake in Pakistan and tsunami relief.  
-- Mine Action and Small Arms Team (ILX): Includes landmine policy and combating proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

[1](#)3. (SBU) The Secretariat has both a policy and an operational role, supported by the GPSF (initially, C\$100 million a year for 5 years). Like counterparts in S/CRS Martin explained that the operational group (IRP) is developing ways to rapidly access the right government and non-governmental personnel to serve alongside the group's standing teams. There are a host of legal, labor, and bureaucratic hurdles to get to the right people and Martin believes this will always be a struggle. There are privacy concerns with maintaining standing lists, for example. But they are working through these issues, and recently, for example, were able to enlist the Ontario chief coroner to help with tsunami relief operations in Sri Lanka, and a senior border officer to work with the Palestinian National Authority.

RECENT MISSIONS

[1](#)4. (SBU) Recent field missions coordinated by the Secretariat

include the Darfur peace support mission for the AU force; security support for the Haitian elections; the civilian component for the Afghanistan PRT; support for the Ward team working border services and justice issues in the Middle East. The Secretariat has a scanty budget of C\$100 million this year, but Martin said he believes they are ready to "unlock the safe." This money is going fast, with C\$52 million already committed to lease helicopters for the AU force in Darfur. He added that they are often required to move quickly but still follow (onerous) procurement rules, which is a challenge.

15. (SBU) The Secretariat was also responsible for the planning of the DART team deployment to Pakistan. This began with a "3D (diplomacy, defense, and development) reconnaissance" to Pakistan within 24 hours of the quake, led by START Director General (and Ambassador for Land Mine policy) Ross Hynes within days of the quake, and including a senior representative from Defense and CIDA. The team assessed the help that Canada could bring and a recommendation made to Cabinet that the DART be deployed. Martin pointed out, however, that the DART team is for the medium-term of a crisis; it is not a first responder.

#### INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION

16. (SBU) Martin said that Canada is interested in the right mechanism to coordinate its approach to post-conflict stabilization with other countries having similar constructs, e.g. the U.S., U.K, Netherlands, and possibly Norway and France. He speculated that the G-8 might be one way to go, or alternatively establish coordinated meetings or conference calls. Martin said that Canada is most interested in practical discussions of "real" cases that we may all be working in the future, rather than theory or "bureaucratrics."

In most cases, he said, the sooner specific and joint planning begins the better. Martin acknowledged that at present civilian planning for crisis response tends to be married to military planning, since DND has extensive planning experience and significantly more personnel devoted to the process. For Afghanistan operations, for example, Martin said his bureau continues to depend heavily on U.S. CENTCOM for most of its intelligence and planning support for the PRT.

17. (SBU) Comment: The START Secretariat has taken on a number of missions since its inception. Though it appears to be managing them capably, operationally the bureau is stretched thin on the personnel side. START personnel would welcome increased contact with U.S. counterparts at some point, especially discussions about potential future missions where we may one day share a foxhole. They also expressed interest in sharing lessons learned from recent experiences, but did not yet have such lessons catalogued themselves.

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